


Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

*Always Test Teachings Against Scripture*

<sup>4</sup>I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.  
<sup>5</sup>For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Q1. [Verse 4] Of what should we be cautious, be aware? And why?

Cautious/aware?

Why?

**Matthew 18:16<sup>b</sup>, 20** [(NIV-1984)]


[Jesus declared:]

<sup>16b</sup> so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. [Deuteronomy 19:15] ' . . .

<sup>20</sup> “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

Q2. [Verse 5 & Matthew 18:20] Paul stated that he is “present with you in spirit”. Is “present with you in spirit” essentially the same thing as when Jesus’ declared: “where two or three come together in my name (↑)”?

Q3. Why might it be important to have two or more in agreement to “come together in my name”?

 If we define a church as people coming together in unity to worship and honor the Lord, then we can argue that the simplest church is the home, in which a husband and wife prayerfully reach-out to the Lord with praise, thanksgiving, intercession, and supplication. The husband and wife are unified by marriage, by their belief in the saving grace of Christ Jesus, and by their prayers. The husband and wife can be assured that Jesus is “with them”!

That begs the question: then, is it hopeless for one Believer to pray? The answer is “NO! It is not hopeless.”. In James 5:16<sup>c</sup>, the Apostle James writes, “*The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective* [NIV-2011]”. We have many examples from our Holy Bible of an individual praying, God hearing, and God acting upon the prayer. In fact, the next two verses in James 5, recounts an Old Testament example of the Prophet Elijah: “<sup>17</sup> *Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed that it would not rain. And it did not rain on the land for three and a half years!* <sup>18</sup> *Then*

## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

*Elijah prayed again. And the rain came down from the sky, and the land grew crops again.* [International Children's Bible (ICB)]". While Elijah was alone, he prayed and God answered.

We must remember that God is not a divine 'vending machine'. Our prayers should be aligned with God's wants and desires as we obey Scripture and the promptings/whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

Q4. [Verse 5] Paul writes, "I . . . delight to see . . . how firm your faith in Christ is". Is Paul hypocritical, because throughout this Letter he seems to admonish the Colossians for their deviations from the Truth of the Gospel message? (Hint: is their foundational knowledge of the Gospel correct?)

Yes? }  
No? } Why?

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<sup>6</sup>So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,  
<sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Q5. Have you the student received "Christ Jesus as [your] Lord"?

Yes?  
No?

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Q6. Do you "continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith, . . . and overflowing with thankfulness"?

Yes? }  
No? } Why?


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## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

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### Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

 Colossians 2:8 (↓) is one of the starkest warnings we find in the Bible!

<sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Q7. In the phrase “rather than on Christ”, to what does “on Christ” refer?

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Q8. What might be an example of “human tradition”?

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Q9. To what does “the basic principles of this world” refer?

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When Russell Moore, the editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today*, was interviewed on NPR, he told a chilling story about preaching. A number of pastors, he said, had reported to him essentially the same experience. They would be preaching on a passage like the Sermon on the Mount, including sayings such as “turn the other cheek,” “blessed are the merciful,” or “love your enemies,” only to find themselves sharply attacked at the church door.

“Where’d you get that nonsense?!?!” some aggrieved parishioner inevitably would ask.

“From Christ Jesus,” the startled pastor would respond. “I was literally quoting Christ Jesus.”

Far from mumbling an embarrassed apology, the critic would instead walk away, scoffing, “Yeah, but that doesn’t work anymore. That’s weak.”

*A Cautionary Tale*

*The story is from the ‘Clergy Coaching Network’, Facebook, January, 2024*

*And is based on an NPR Interview dated August 5, 2023:*

<https://www.npr.org/2023/08/05/1192374014/russell-moore-on-altar-call-for-evangelical-america>

## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

Q10. What might be some examples of “hollow and deceptive philosoph[ies]”? [For example: My salvation comes from Jesus and my good works. God grades on a curve, not pass/fail. I’m better than my poor-excuse for a neighbor. God is love; I’ll see you in Heaven.]

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Q11. How can we, who believe, ensure that we are not “take[n] . . . captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy”?

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### Acts 17:11 [NIV-1984]

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

<sup>9</sup> For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

Q12. How would you explain “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form”?

What does “in Christ” mean?

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What does “all the fullness of the Deity” mean? (Who/What is the deity?)

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What does “lives in bodily form” mean?

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Additional thoughts?

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### John 10:25-30 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS); a paraphrase]

“I have told you,” replied Jesus, “and you do not believe it. What I have done in my Father’s name is sufficient to prove my claim, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep recognise my voice and I know who they are. They follow me and I give them eternal life. They will never die and no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. And no one can tear anything out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are One.”

### Matthew 28:18 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

### Philippians 2:5-8 [NIV-1984]

<sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature

## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Q13. What does “Christ, who is the head over every power and authority” mean to you?

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Q14. [Apologetics] If Christ Jesus is truly “the head over every power and authority”, then why is there so much suffering in this world? (Hint: does Satan have a role in suffering?)


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### Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

### *We, Who Believe, Are Bound By Christ’s Blood, Not Old Testament Law*

<sup>11</sup> In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Q15. Paul likens the work of the Holy Spirit on the new Believer as a circumcision. What part of the body is affected? Is this an action that is specific to one gender (male-only; or female-only), or both genders?

Body part? H \_\_\_ \_\_\_ T 

Male? Female? Both?

Why might Paul use the circumcision analogy?

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## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

Q16. If you have experienced (or observed) an adult immersion baptism, does verse 12 describe the act of faith?

Yes? } Why?  
No? }

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Q17. Do you believe that “God . . . raised him [Christ Jesus] from the dead”? Why?

Yes? } Why?  
No? }

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<sup>13a</sup> When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, <sup>13b</sup> God made you alive with Christ. <sup>13c</sup> He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Q18. [Verse 13<sup>a</sup>] What was the condition of your faith as described in verse 13<sup>a</sup>? (Believer? Unbeliever? Other?)

Believer? Unbeliever? Other? Add'l thoughts?

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Q19. [Verse 13<sup>a</sup>] Thinking about your faith journey from the previous question, what change(s) did you experience?

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Q20. [Verse 13<sup>c</sup>] What does “He forgave us all our sins” mean to you?

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Q21. [Verse 14] What was the “written code, with its regulations”?

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## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

Q22. [Verse 14] How is the “written code . . . against us and . . . opposed to us”?

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Q23. [Verse 14] How was the “written code . . . [nailed] to the cross”?

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The commentator Charles Ellicott provides this perspective on *nailing it to the cross*:

“At this point the idea of atonement comes in. Hitherto we have heard simply of free forgiveness and love of God. Now the bond is viewed, not as cancelled by a simple act of divine mercy, but as absolutely destroyed by Christ, by “nailing it to His cross.”

“Our Lord ‘redeemed us from the curse of the Law,’ by His death, ‘being made a curse for us’ (Galatians 3:13). St. Paul boldly speaks of that curse as a penalty standing against us, and as nailed to the cross with Himself, so to be forever cancelled in the great declaration, ‘It is finished.’ If any more definite allusion is to be sought for, we might be inclined to refer to the ‘title’ on the cross, probably nailed to it [John 19:19]. Such title declared the explanation of the sufferer’s death. The cancelled curse of the Law was just such an explanation of the great atoning death, and the title, declaring His mediatorial kingdom, showed the curse cancelled thereby.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/colossians/2-14.htm>]

Q24. [Verse 15] Paul wrote, “he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross”. Who is “he”? Who are “them”? How did “he [make] a public spectacle of them”? How did “he . . . [triumph] over them by the cross”?

Who is “He”?

Who are “Them”?

Public spectacle?

Triumph over them by the cross?




Verse 15: “Not only did God cancel out the accusations of the law against the [Believer], but He also conquered and disarmed the evil angels (powers and authorities, Romans 1:16, Ephesians 6:12), who entice people to follow asceticism [an ascetic leads a life of severe self-control] and false teachings about Christ.

**He made a public spectacle of them:** “The picture is of conquered soldiers stripped of their clothes as well as their weapons to symbolize their total defeat. . . The metaphor recalls a Roman general leading his captives through the streets of his city for all the citizens to see as evidence of his complete victory (2 Corinthians 2:14). That Christ triumphed over the devil and his cohorts is seen from Matthew 12:29; Luke 10:18; and Romans 16:20.” [©1991, The Zondervan NASB Study Bible, published by Zondervan, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI 49530. All rights reserved. Page 1742]

## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

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### Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

### *Jesus' Teachings Are Eternal; Human Teachings Are Temporary*

<sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration, or a Sabbath day.

<sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

**Colossians 2:16-17** [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS); a paraphrase]

[The following is J.B. Phillips' translated paraphrase of these verses:]

In view of these tremendous facts, don't let anyone worry you by criticising what you eat or drink, or what holy days you ought to observe, or bothering you over new moons or sabbaths. All these things have at most only a symbolical value: the solid fact is Christ.


Q25. Are Believers above God's Law (i.e., the Ten Commandments)? What does Paul mean when he writes, "do not let anyone judge you"?

Believers above the law? Yes? No? Why?

Paul: "judge you"? Thoughts?

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 “*what you eat or drink*” probably refers to the Jewish dietary laws. The festivals mentioned are Jewish holy days celebrated annually, monthly (New Moon), and weekly (the Sabbath). These rituals distinguished the Jews from their pagan neighbors. Failure to observe them could be easily noticed by those who were keeping track of what others did. But we should not let ourselves be judged by the opinions of others, because Christ has set us free.

“Paul told the Colossian Christians not to let others criticize their diet or their religious ceremonies. Instead of outward observance, believers should focus on faith in Christ alone. Our worship, traditions, and ceremonies can help bring us close to God but we should never criticize fellow Christians whose traditions and ceremonies differ from ours. More important than how we worship is that we worship Christ. Don't let anyone judge you. You are responsible to Christ.” [©1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, *The Life Application® Bible*, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved. Page 2164]




## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

Q26. Is Paul concerned about mature Believers criticizing new Believers over disputable (or inconsequential) matters?

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 The [StudySheet for 1st Corinthians 8](#) examines 1 Corinthians 8:7-13 (↓) in greater detail. That said, the 1 Corinthians 8:7-13 passage “illustrates an example of “disputable matters” intertwined with Paul’s concern that we ‘mature’ Believers might squelch an ‘infant’ Believer over inconsequential topics that have no bearing on a person’s salvation. We humans are an impatient bunch and Believers also suffer from the ‘impatient’ character trait. We Believers tend to know better and do not like to wait for the Holy Spirit to perform His work within the heart of a new Believer – “I only want to help’ and then wonder why it didn’t work out. Admittedly, it is a balancing act that must be covered in prayer, Scripture reading(s), and obedience to the whispers of the Holy Spirit, Who dwells within each of us who believe [Ephesians 1:13-14].” [© For All Eternity on behalf of Christ Jesus. [StudySheet Lesson 6: 1 Corinthians 6:1-20](#), pages 2-3]

### 1 Corinthians 8:7-13

<sup>7</sup> But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food, they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. <sup>8</sup> But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

<sup>9</sup> Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup> For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup> So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. <sup>12</sup> When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

 For example: do you like bacon? Eating any pork product might be a barrier-of-a-lifetime to a person who grew-up shunning pork products; some will not even handle an unbroken package of bacon. Your ministry might be severely weakened — your diet might be a severe obstacle to this person, especially if the person was raised in a Jewish or Muslim household. We must be aware of circumstances — as much as possible — surrounding friends and acquaintances. How can we tell? By asking questions and reading faces. After all, we should be interested in the person, so that we want to know about them, what they think, and what they feel.

### Romans 14:10

<sup>10</sup> You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

### Romans 14:13

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

 Verse 17 is repeated for your convenience.

<sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Q27. What is “a shadow of the things that were to come”? Were the “shadows” referenced in the Old and/or New Testament?

Shadow? Old Testament? New Testament?

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Q28. What is “the reality” that Paul mentions?

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## Day 5


 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

<sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. <sup>19a</sup> He has lost connection with the Head, <sup>19b</sup> from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Q29. [Verse 18] How would you describe “false humility”?

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 **Do not let anyone . . . disqualify you for the prize:** infers judgment (discernment + consequence). While someone may attempt to judge your actions, we must examine ourselves and then their motives. If our actions and motives are Biblical, then we can carefully examine their words and the implications behind them. Are their words of criticism (or correction) based on Scripture, or traditions, or (worse, yet) opinion? Are they play-acting with a humble demeanor, while their words convey a superiority? Remember Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians 1:13-14 that contains an irrefutable promise from The Word (see John 1:1, 14, 17), The Lord Christ Jesus, Himself. The Word speaking through the Holy Spirit had the Apostle Paul write that we, who believe in His saving grace, are sealed with “the promised Holy Spirit Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance”! Praise the LORD!

## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

Q30. [Verse 18] The “worship of angels” seems strange to us. How would you explain the phrase?

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 **the worship of angels:** “It evidently appears, from several passages [written in the mid-first century by the Jewish philosopher] Philo, to have been the opinion of that learned Jew, that angels were messengers who presented our prayers to God, as well as brought down his favours to us. He represents this view of the matter as most humble and reverential, and there is no doubt but it prevailed among other Jews. . . . It was undoubtedly because the Jews entertained so great a respect for angels, on account of their supposed agency in human affairs, that the apostle [Paul], in this epistle, and [to] that [of the author of] . . . Hebrews, took so much pains to show that the Son of God is greater than all angels.” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/colossians/2-18.htm>]

**1 Corinthians 6:2<sup>a</sup>, 3<sup>a</sup>** [NIV-1984]

<sup>2a</sup> Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? . . . <sup>3a</sup> Do you not know that we will judge angels?

Q31. [Verse 18] What does “puffs . . . up” infer?

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**Proverbs 16:18** [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

First pride, then the crash — the bigger the ego, the harder the fall.

Q32. [Verse 19<sup>a</sup>] Who (or what) is “the Head”?

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**John 10:30** [NIV-1984]

“I and the Father are one.”

**Philippians 2:6** [NIV-1984]

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

Q33. [Verse 19<sup>a</sup>] How is it possible to “[lose] connection with the Head”?

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**Matthew 12:31-32** [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

“There’s nothing done or said that can’t be forgiven. But if you deliberately persist in your slanders against God’s Spirit, you are repudiating the very One who forgives. If you reject the Son of Man out of some misunderstanding, the Holy Spirit can forgive you, but when you reject the Holy Spirit, you’re sawing off the branch on which you’re sitting, severing by your own perversity all connection with the One who forgives.

## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

Q34. [Verse 19<sup>b</sup>] Is Paul describing a physical body? Or is his description a metaphor for something?

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### **Ephesians 4:14-16** [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

<sup>14</sup> As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is, Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

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## Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>20</sup> Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: <sup>21</sup> "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? <sup>22</sup> These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup> Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Q35. [Verse 20] Since you died with Christ: Is Paul discussing our salvation? Or events future to us — perhaps, the death of our physical body?

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## Lesson 4: Colossians 2:4-23

Q36. What are “the basic principles of this world”?

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Q37. How do you explain “this world[’s] . . . rules . . . are all destined to perish”? Why will they perish?

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Q38. Why do human regulations fail to “[restrain] sensual indulgence”?

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 “We cannot reach up to God by following rules of self-denial, by observing rituals, or by practicing religion. Paul isn’t saying all rules are bad. . . . But no keeping of laws or rules will earn salvation. The Good News is that God reaches down to human beings, and He asks for our response. Man-made religions focus on human effort; Christianity focuses on Christ’s work. Believers must put aside sinful desires, but doing so is the by-product of our new life in Christ, not the reason for our new life. Our salvation does not depend on our discipline and rule-keeping, but on the power of Christ’s death and resurrection.” [©1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, *The Life Application® Bible*, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved. Page 821]

 The important take-away from the previous comment is the Truth that in Christianity God through Christ Jesus reaches down to humankind. In all other religions, humankind is trying to reach up to a somewhat capricious god as they attempt to earn their way into their god’s good graces and heaven.

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